Vale of Leven Rhymings and other Verses.

Miss Cornelia Rice.

Vale of Leven Rhymings and other Verses.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE Author of these verses would have been the very last to claim for them any literary merit. Some of them were written to amuse his own leisure hours, and others to entertain his friends. A few of them appeared from time to time in "The Lennox Herald" and other local papers, while one or two reached a larger circle of readers in the columns of the "People's Friend."

They are now published in this form in compliance with the wishes of many of his acquaintances; and if no other purpose be served, the booklet will help to keep green the remembrance of one of the most loyal hearted and manliest Christian fellows that the writer of this little preface has been privileged to know.

But though these verses make no pretence to rank as poetry in the true sense of the term, it will be at once allowed by the reader who has the poetic taste that many of them show a felicity of expression that not every versifier possesses, and a power of seeing into and interpreting the great realities that is given only to those who have a share of the poetic soul.

It is unnecessary to specify, but the lines on "A Little Songster" on page 60, and those addressed to "A Little Bird" on page 45, will bear out what is said. That our versifier had a genuine strain of wholesome humour will be readily conceded by any who take the trouble to turn to such pieces as "The Man in the Moon" on page 78, or the "Power of Liquid Air" on page 83.

Another feature is worthy of special notice: It is the power of keen insight into and appreciation of the life and ways of the working-class, among whom his lot in life was cast. He knew by experience the hardships and difficulties of his fellow toilers, but was able to see how amid these the true purpose of life may be reached, and how a brave heart can make music to itself in spite of the monotony of the daily task. The reader is referred for evidence of this to such pieces as "Hogmanay" on page 56, or "The Dying Shipbuilder" on page 94, and many others.

It was the brave heart and happy spirit set forth in these pieces that endeared him living to many friends, and that will always be associated with his memory now that he is gone.

For he is gone!—cut down in the prime of his manhood by a cruel malady that made his last days on earth days of torture. The pathetic circumstances in which the last lines of this book were composed will sufficiently explain themselves. The few who watched by him during the days after his return from the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary will never forget the resolute Christian courage with which he endured his extremity of long-continued agony. He had long before learned from "Him who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows" the royal secret how to suffer and be strong; and many a time in those hours of racking pain the happy smile he bore told of the peace within "which passeth all understanding."

And it is this, now that he is passed to his rest, that will commend these verses to all who understand the value for this world of a brave, though humble, Christian life.

J. CROMARTY SMITH.

Alexandria, Dumbartonshire,
19th December, 1903.

*JOHNNIE BLUE'S WELL.**

As dooncast in sorrow I silently sit,
Some pleasure that's past before me doth flit,
An' cheers up my heart; sae I laugh tae mysel'
When I think on the sport by Johnnie Blue's well.

"Johnnie Blue" wis a poet, "Gateside" his abode,
His "well's" situated on "Neilston" back-road,
An' over its waters he cast a great spell,
That they'd a' be "poets" who drank oot the well.

So oft when I'm passin' I laughingly think
I'll stop for a minute tae hae a bit drink;
For a "poet" I hope to be some day mysel',
Wi' drinkin' the water oot "Johnnie Blue's" well.

Auld "Johnnie," each nicht when passin' that way,
Spiels clean ower the dyke tae the fit o' the brae,
An' murmurs some rhymes nae ane heeds but himsel',
In praise o' the water he drinks oot the well.

But "Johnnie," puir man, is noo growin' auld,
And he's wearin' awa' wi' the win' an' the cauld,
An' soon he'll be laid doon tae rest by himsel',
Free frae a' his woes an' the bonnie wee well.

* Lines anent "Johnnie's Well" were written when the author was 14 years of age.

ANSWER TO "JOHNNIE BLUE'S WELL."

On Kirkton Back-road see yon labour-worn wight,
As he toils to his hame by himsel';
He can't stop to think, or stoop down for a drink,
Without being watched by "Caldwell."

Have the toils of the day not been trouble enough
To a man to whom years are a load,
Without your peering eye, "H. Caldwell," on the sly,
Annoying me up the Back-road?

By the time ye hae struggled up life's rugged brae,
Through as many hard years as I've seen,
Ye'll be thankfu' at times for a rest by the way,
As ye mak' frae yer labour at e'en.

I am old, it is true, and nicknamed "Johnnie Blue,"
And of hardships I've had my ain share;
But a rhymer, of all things, should strive to be true,
And the feelings of others should spare.

Your rhyming can't hurt me where'er I am kent,
And I think ye ne'er thocht sae yersel';
'Twas "sport for the Philistines" clearly ye meant,
When ye rhymed about "Johnnie Blue's Well."

But hear me, young frien', for I ken ye fu' well,
The neist time to rhyme ye're inclined
Say naething ye widna like said o' yersel',
And this maxim aye keep weel in mind.

Or when I neist sprachle oot owre for a drink,
If I get ye ocht near to the well,
In spite o' whatever ye threaten or think,
I'll dook yer heid into't, "Caldwell."

Then surely whate'er "inspiration" there be
In the water ye ca' "Johnnie's Well,"
Ye can drink o't yer fill, and a "poet" should be,
Wi' a mair likely story to tell.

JOHNNIE—but I winna hae "BLUE."

* * *

"CALDWELL'S" ANSWER TO JOHNNIE'S REPLY.

JOHNNIE, my man, I can see plainly you think
That I wis aye prying when you took a drink;
But 'tis not the case, for I'm sorry mysel'
That ever I made such a rhyme on your well.

The rhyme I composed was made for no harm—
I said ower its waters you cast a great charm;
Ye ken that you did, for I heard you mysel',
As you stooped to drink at the bonnie wee well.

So, Johnnie, beware! I ken ye are auld,
And I'm young and stout, and the water is cauld;
So keep doon your temper, and aye watch yersel',
Or perhaps I may dook your heid first in the well.

Or let us be friends, and I'll have a care
To rhyme on the feelings of others nae mair,
But do all I can to cheer up the old,
And gain that reward that is prized more than gold.

So, Johnnie, dear brother, forgive poor "Caldwell"!
For you were as foolish when young, like mysel',
But when a' the troubles o' life I go through,
May I be as hale and as hardy as you!

Yet I scarcely think 'twas you who wrote the reply
That wis meant to strike terror to a young chap like I;
But kent I the fellow, I'd meet him mysel',
And dook his heid, instead of yours, into the well.

* * *

LAST REPLY TO "JOHNNIE BLUE'S WELL."

Your answer o' the 6th o' June
In some things might be praised;
Although its tenor, ta'en a' through,
Conflicting feelings raised.

Your opening verses pleased weel;
I saw your true condition,—
Sorry for what you'd said that hurt,
And open to contrition.

You ask me to "forgi'e" what's past,
And say you'll mak' amends

By hurtin' nae ane's feelin's mair,
And seeking nobler ends.

At once I stretched my right hand forth,
And said—"Forgi'e ye? Yes;"
But when I read your neist verse out,—
My feelings ye can guess.

Ye taunt my age, ye boast your youth,
Ye threaten what ye'll do;—
My hand, forsooth! my impluse was
To let ye feel my shoe.

"Presumptuous youth!" I sternly said,
"How dare ye swagger so?
Hold out your hand, the tawse are here,
Ye'll taste them ere ye go!"

But your neist verse put a' things right,
My aged ire cooled down;
Again I stretched my right hand out,
And smiles replaced the frown.

Yes, that's a task to set yourself,—
Relieve your neighbours' woes,
Revive the aged, cheer the frail,
Bring friendship between foes.

Then when ye've warsled wi' the warld
As many years as me,
And look far back into the past,
A pleasant sight ye'll see—

A sight worth a' the "dookit heads"
A laland tongue could tell,
Whether of high Parnassian springs,
Or "Johnnie's" humble well.

Your closing verse—its doubts and threats
Gie my auld nerves a tug;
And had ye at my elbow been
I wad hae cuffed your lug.

Ye'd try, wi' impious hands, to snatch
Frae aff my haffits grey
The bays that I hae prized sae much
And guarded many a day.

In a' ye do, consistent be—
Ye ca'd me "poet" yersel',
And hoped in time to be ane too
By drinking oot my well.

So I maun stop, for my auld banes
Are wearied, stiff, and sair,
And plead that I wad gie them rest,
And wadna scribble mair.

CALDWELL'S LAST REPLY

My frien', whoever you may be,
You treat me sair indeed;
For those replies you send to me
Mak the hair staun on my heid.

But this, dear sir, to you I'll tell,
Ere these few lines I close—
Don't use your shoe on young "Caldwell,"
Or you may hurt your toes.

You tell me that you'll cuff my ears—
Well, that's against our laws;
And then, because I'm young in years,
To me you'll tak' the tawse.

But get your tawse—come wi' them soon;
I'll save you a' your pains;
For I'll collect my schoolmates roun',
And hunt you aff wi' stanes.

And then you'll surely understan'—
Although me you annoy—
That he's no man who'd raise his han'
To strike a beardless boy.

Though you are hiding in the dark,
Sometimes you dae show fight;
But dogs may at their master bark,
Although they dare not bite.

So bark away—for bark you can—
But, sir, I tell you plain,
A child would scarcely heed a man
Who widna sign his name.

So tempt me not to write again,
I've work to do elsewhere;
So now I will lay down my pen,
And answer you nae mair.

* * *

VALE OF LEVEN WANDERERS.

Arise, ye Leven Wanderers, your time to strike is nigh,
Since the Vale of Leven Football Club have lost the final tie.
Our town is deep in sorrow, and nought can cheer it up,
Since the Renton lads have beat the Vale, and carried home the Cup.

Then arise, ye Leven Wanderers, go at it with a will,
You have the style of playing, the science, and the skill,
And in next season's struggle renew the fight again,
To show the teams of Scotland you are the coming men.

You played the Renton for the Cup, but, lads, you were undone,
For they accident'ly beat you by three goals to your one.
But next season, if you meet them, I think you will not yield
Until ye either conquer, or die upon the field.

We weep for Vale of Leven. Is all its glory fled?
To Scotland 'twas a terror, but now its fame is dead.
But oh! Why should we weep, or let our joys expire?
Although the Renton beat the Vale, the Cup's still in the shire.

So arise, ye Leven Wanderers, and perpetuate your name,
And show the teams of Scotland how to play the noble game;
We all shall then applaud you, and cheer your brave hearts up,
When you bring to Alexandria the Association Cup.

* * *

THE BRAES OF CARMAN.

I AM auld noo, an' feeble, an' sadly I mourn,
For the days o' my youth nae mair can return
When light-hearted an' merry in simmer I ran
Among the green heather on bonnie Carman.

I welcomed the simmer wi' a' its fair flowers,
An' birdies that sang in the bonnie green bowers,
Then awa' frae my hame I oft merrily ran
Tae climb the steep hillside o' bonnie Carman.

And oft frae Carman I ha'e viewed ye wi' pride,
Majestic Ben Lomond an' fair river Clyde;
For I know ye were made by the same loving han'
That placed the sweet heather on bonnie Carman.

But my limbs ha'e grown auld, and grey is my hair,
An', lovely Carman, I can climb thee nae mair;
But it cheers me to think on the days I began
Tae climb the steep hillside o' bonnie Carman.

* * *

LOCAL SKETCH OF KILLOCH GLEN; or, JOHNNIE BROON AND THE WITCHES.

A worthy o' auld Neilston toon,
Wha wis weel kenn'd as "Johnnie Broon,"
Yae nicht frae Paisley comin' hame,
It chanced that he was jist alane;
As ower the Fereneze Braes he cam',
And onward by the Paisley Dam,
He staggered on and aff the path,
And cursed it in his drunken wrath,
Until he reached the Killoch Glen—
"A place that's shunned at nicht by men";
Yet going onward still, pell-mell,
Into a hole puir Johnnie fell.

Then loud the wind began tae blaw,
And fast and faster fell the snaw;
When Jock arose, he looked around,
The snaw lay deep upon the ground,
And bushes, tae, wi' snaw were white—
To Jock it wis an awfu' sight.

'Guidsake! this is the Killoch Glen,
And I am at the witches' den;
And a' the witches that I see
Seem to be comin' after me.
Alas! since I am in the place,
I maun prepare tae try a race."

Then doon the glen puir Jock did rin—
The witches a' were after him—
Till ower he tumbled on his noddle,
And spilt what he had in his bottle;
Then up he got and cried aloud—
"Turn back, ye dirty, thieving crowd,
And dinna jump about sae frisky,
Since you have made me spill my whisky."
"Ah! Jock," ane cried, "ye drunken loon,
We'll chase you hame to Neilston toon,
And put you that you'll ne'er again
Come to disturb us in the glen."

Jock saw his words they didna heed,
So off he started at full speed,
And through the Killoch arch he ran,—
Alas! the chase had but begun.
He never linger'd by the way
Until he climbed the "Burnt Mill Brae";
The witches followed close behind,
And caused puir Jock tae curse their kind.

For when he saw the foremost witch,
He fell, head foremost, in a ditch,
And there did Johnnie, moanin', lie
Until the witches a' gaed by.

Then turnin' up his mournfu' face,
And seeing nane about the place,
Said Jock—"I'll jist hide oot o' sight,
And lie here noo till mornin' light";
Then stretched himself, and there he lay,
And ne'er awoke till break of day.
Then up he got, and looked around,
The snaw still lay upon the ground;
But where wis a' that horrid crew
That he had seen last nicht when fou?
Alas! there was not one in sight,—
Had they a' vanished with the night?
Or was't but superstitious dread
That "drink" had wrought in Johnnie's head?

Jock spoke at last, and this he said—
"Nae mair shall strong drink tak' my head,
For little do some people ken
The devils 'drink' puts into men;
For 'drink' makes many a heart grow sore,
And 'poortith' brings to many a door;
It ruins souls, and wrecks the mind,
And works destruction 'mongst mankind;
So from this hour my life I'll mend,
And be teetotal to the end."

THE AULD "KISSIN'-TREE."

THEY are gone now for ever, those dear, happy days
When I climbed the steep side o' the Fereneze Braes,
And gazed on the scenes, so lovely to see,
As I stood on the hill by the auld "kissin'-tree."

The fields were a' green, and the flow'rs were a' fair,
For the beauties o' Nature had found a hame there;
But *those* lovely scenes, what were they to me
Compared wi' the stem o' the auld "kissin'-tree"?

For its trunk wis well pierced wi' nails a' aroon'
By the laddies from Barrhead an' auld Neilston toon,
And even frae Paisley, light-hearted an' free,
Some cam' ower the hills tae the auld "kissin'-tree."

How oft hae I watched the lad wi' his lass
Ca' a nail in its trunk before he wid pass,
And then turn aboot, wi' a bright smile o' glee,
To taste her sweet lips by the auld "kissin'-tree."

But noo it is gone, an' I mournfully stare
At the place whaur it stood, for I see it nae mair;
An', wi' a sair heart and a tear in my e'e,
I think on langsyne an' the auld "kissin'-tree."

THE KIND-HEARTED PEOPLE O' AULD NEILSTON TOON.

When our money's a' spent an' gone wi' the win',
An' the claes that we wear are ragged an' dune,
An' starvin', an' beggin', we wander aroon',
We'll aye find a welcome in auld Neilston toon.

Through some Neilston people hae little tae spare,
The poor hungry beggars aye get a guid share;
An' the broken-doon spen'thrift, and puir simple loon
Aye find a kind welcome in auld Neilston toon.

Though poor we're by birth, that is only our fate;
A' people on earth can't be wealthy an' great;
An' though the rich whiles in this world come doon,
They are never forsaken in auld Neilston toon.

These kind-hearted people, long may they live
To cheer the poor wand'rer, and always forgive
The faults o' his life, and ne'er cast a froon,
Nor despise an' forsake them, in auld Neilston toon.

Let them stick to the poor then, whatever befa',
And believe in our Father, the Maker o' a';
For the day soon may come when a far higher boon
Shall reward the kind people o' auld Neilston toon.

TO A CHILD.

Sweet little child with eyes of blue,
How many faces smile on you!
In many arms you are caressed,
By many tongues your life is blessed.
While slumbering in your cradle there,
Watched by a mother's tender care,
What know you of the toil and woe
That all on earth must undergo:
The broken hearts, the cruel blows,
The loss of friends, the wrath of foes,
The wrongs and ills that make men mourn
And weep that ever they were born?
But if you prosper on this earth,
Forget not those who gave you birth;
And, though the world against you turn,
Your aged parents never spurn,
But be to them as kind and true,
Dear child, as they are now to you;
And God, so tender and forgiving,
Shall make your life a life worth living.

* * *

NEILSTON CHURCHYARD.

In this old churchyard, grim and cold,
There lie the rich, the poor, and old,
The father, mother, and the child

Who in its nurse's arms oft smiled,
The godlike men who preached the love
Of Him who rules that land above,
The good, the joyous, and the kind,
The lame, the needy, and the blind,
Lost to the jokes of many a hearth,
Free from the slanderous tongues of earth;
Revered by some, by some forgot,
Sorrow and woe disturb them not,
Their stiffened limbs no longer roam,
These cold, dark graves are not their home,
'Tis but their bones that moulder here,
Their souls have sought a higher sphere.
So let them live, and God shall guard
Their cold clay in this old churchyard.

* * *

TO THE AULD OAK TREE THAT STOOD IN ALEXANDRIA.

When we were little children
  Aroun' it aft we played,
An' linked oor herts in frienship
  Beneath its leafy shade,
An' told oor childish fancies
  Wi' merry, sparklin' e'e,
When sitting 'neath the branches
  O' the auld oak tree.

But its bonnie, leafy branches
We'll never see again;
Nor the little, lauchin' faces,
That gathered roun' it then;
For those we loved are scattered,
An' some in daith sleep soun';
An' the auld tree sae bonnie
Has long since been cut doon.

As roun' the town we wan'er,
In wonder aft we pause;
We miss the modest hooses,
Wi' their bonnie, white-washed wa's.
We miss the friendly faces,
An' we see big streets aroun';
The fountain's taen the oak tree's place
Tae decorate the toon.

The stiff an' solemn fountain,
Withoot a spark o' life;
Through simmer an through winter
The scene o' prayer an' strife.
Unlike the lovely oak,
Wi' its giant branches dear,
That filled oor herts wi' gladness
Through mony a weary year.

But youth an' joy hae vanished,
An' naethin' can reca'
The little lauchin' faces
That daith has taen awa'.

An' we, grown tired an' feeble,
This worl' o' strife maun lea' ;
Tae be forgot for ever,
Like the auld oak tree.

* * *

A DREAM OF LOVE.

When summer decks the fields with flowers,
And sunshine lights the vale,
And lovers meet 'neath leafy bowers
To tell their joyous tale.
When hearts are pledged and vows are made,
And faces beam with glee,
To-night, beneath this old tree shade,
I dream, sweet maid, of thee.

Through summer lose its golden hue,
And Nature's sweets decay,
The precious love I bear for you
Can never fade away.
The little flowers that bloom in peace
Shall wither on the lea ;
But, lovely maid, I'll never cease
To dream sweet dreams of thee.

Should wintry clouds obscure the sky,
And sunlight cease to shine,
The sacred love shall never die
In this fond heart of mine.

For pure from out my heart's deep source
My love shall still flow free,
And never seek to change its course,
Nor turn, sweet maid, from thee.

* * *

SPRINGHILL.

THOU lovely wee clachan wi' beauties a' roon',
Far oot o' the noise an' the steer o' the toon,
Whaur kind-hearted people in friendship do dwell,
An' honest hard-workers whom nane can excel.
Its bonnie built hooses are modest an' braw;
Their wa's are as white as the untrodden snaw,
An' busy hoose-wifies wi' tireless skill
Gar a' things look cheery in bonnie Springhill.

There stauns the auld work, wi' its clatterin' noise,
Keepin' time tae the sangs o' the wee bleacher boys;
Uncultured wi' music, yet sweetly they sing,
An' memories anew in oor weary hearts spring.
An' fondly we listen, for every sweet strain
Awakens the dreams o' oor childhood again;
But the faces that smiled oft in innocent truth
Hae vanished awa' frae the hames o' their youth.

The sang o' the birdies enrapturing swells
Roon' Springhill big hoose, whaur the dear Major dwells;
For brave an' sincerely he aye played his part,
Man ne'er wis endowed wi' a kindlier heart.

An' Rock Mount's fair mansion, wi' silvery glow,
Looks peacefully doon on the clachan below ;
Its kind-hearted maister God keep frae a' ill,—
He's a true benefactor o' bonnie Springhill.

But the gloamin' o' nicht comes waefu' tae me,
As lanely I staun by the hawthorn tree ;
An' the burnie beneath me, while still wimplin' on,
Seems ever to murmur "thy playmates are gone."
An' auld wrinkled granny, hoo aften she mourns,
For gran'pa nae mair to the cottage returns ;
An' Neilston's grim churchyard, sae silent an' still,
Hauds mony a kind heart frae bonnie Springhill.

But Springhill, dear Springhill, sweet place of my birth,
When trouble an' years tak' me frae this earth,
Oh ! lay me to rest in a calm slumber deep,
In auld Neilston toon, whaur my forefaithers sleep,
An' there let me lie in a dreamless repose,
Free from earth's sorrows, its troubles an' woes,
For life comes an' goes, dear Lord, at Thy will,
So guard the kind people o' bonnie Springhill.

♦ ♦ ♦

THE DEAD CHILD.

Her pure white bosom heaves no more,
Her eyes look dull and dead ;
The stricken mother stands heart-sore
Beside her daughter's bed.

The mournful father, now despair
Has in his bosom sprung;
He never thought that Death would care
To take a child so young.

The little brother, lingering near,
Disturbs the silence deep,
By whispering in his mother's ear,
"Wake little sis from sleep.
The woodlands now in splendour glow,
Wild flowers adorn the plain";
His mother sighs, and answers low—
"She'll never wake again.

"She was too young for toil and strife,
Too pure for earthly care,
Too innocent for such a life,
Too beautiful and fair.
A smile sits on her features still,
But soon 'twill pass away;
God called; her soul obeyed His will,
Earth only holds her clay."

* *

THE AULD KIRKYAIRD O' RENTON.

The dreary win' is sighin'
As if it grieved wi' me;
While lovely Leven, sobbin',
Flows on past Croftengea.

The toil o' day is over,
The sun has socht the west—
In the auld kirkyaird o' Renton
Young Jeanie lies at rest.

The birds hae ceased their singin',
Oh! mournfu' wis each strain;
The little flo'ers are hingin'
Their heids upon the plain.
The stars shine ower my sorrow,
But nought can ease my breast;
For cauld in Renton kirkyaird
Young Jeanie lies at rest.

Bright shines the sun o' simmer
When mornin' has began,
But sune in radiant splendour
It sets behind Carman.
The moor-fowl stop their screechin',
An' seek their cosy nest,
While cauld in Renton kirkyaird
Young Jeanie lies at rest.

Sleep on, thou queen o' beauty,
Through simmer's golden 'oors,
Thy broken-hearted lover
Shall deck thy grave wi' flo'ers
Until wi' care an' sorrow
He is nae mair oppressed,
An' in the Renton kirkyaird
He lies wi' thee at rest.

TO A MAIDEN.

Our young dream is o'er, we both drift apart,
And soon shall thy image pass out of my heart,
Burned deep in my bosom my love's sacred flame,
When I blushed with delight at the sound of thy name;
But our vows are all broken, our meetings are o'er,
I'll strive to forget thee and love thee no more.

But if in my dreams thy fair vision should rise,
And I gaze once again in thy beautiful eyes,
And thy sweet voice once more in my bosom should steal,
And rekindle the love that my heart used to feel—
Arise, independence! wake, stubborn pride!
And dash all such fancies forever aside.

For what is a maiden so faithless as thou,
So lost to her honour, so false to her vow—
The tales of a gossip to heed and believe,
The heart of thy lover to wrong and deceive?
So worthless of loving, so base and untrue,
My heart will ne'er break for a maiden like you.

* * *

TIRED OF LIFE.

I am tired of life, with its sorrowful load;
I am tired and sick of my humble abode;
My brain has grown dull, and my bosom distressed,
With sighing, and weeping, and longing for rest.

I am tired of this world and the people I see,
And I doubt not but some are as tired of me;
For the wrongs I have borne through trouble and strife,
In the bloom of my youth I am tired of life.

I am tired of loving—that passion is blind—
The heart of a woman is false and unkind;
Her face may be fair, but her tongue's cruel blow
Leaves many a heart in the deepest of woe.

For sorrow is naught but a high-swelling wave,
Rest cannot be found on this side of the grave,
Death comes like a shadow our troubles to cease,
And bears us away to a mansion of peace.

* *

THE BURNS ANNIVERSARY.

THE SONGS OF THE BARD.

The songs of Burns, so sweetly sung,
Well suited to our mother tongue;
The joyous sweetness they impart
Fills with delight each Scottish heart,
Making the murky shadows roll
Away from every clouded soul,
Waking to life the dreamy youth
To feel their power and know their truth;
They ease the mind that cares annoy,
And fill the saddest heart with joy.

So sweet they strike the listener's ear,
Each note so pure, each word sincere,
To come from one whose life was marred
Like thine, our noble Scottish bard!
Perfection traced thy steps along,
And crowned thee prince of Scottish song;
And Nature smiled at thy true plan
In picturing the life of man,
And heard thee praise her mantle green
And sweetly sing of "Bonnie Jean,"
And watched thy heart to sorrow driven
When "Mary's" soul passed on to heaven.
Great bard, thy fame shall fade not soon,
'Twas thou who chanted "Bonnie Doon";
Thy poet's mind, though sad with care,
Immortalised the town of Ayr.
A glorious light shall ever shine
O'er never-dying "Auld Langsyne."
Its tender words around us creep
And make the old grey-bearded weep;
While sadly all the nation mourns
For thy great loss, brave Rabbie Burns.

THE AULD LEVEN RESIDENTER'S LAMENT.

Oh tae be a careless laddie playin' by my mither's side,
Or wanderin' wi' my faither on the hills abune the Clyde,
Or pu'in' little flowerets in the balmy simmer even,
Till the gowden sun sank downward, behind the hills o' Leven.

Or tae see my grey-haired granny sittin' at her cottage door,
Repeatin' some auld story she had aften telt before;
Or hear her quietly hummin', wi' guid braid Scottish tongue,
Some deep, heart-rendin' ballad, that her faither's mither sung.

Or tae feel my lovin' granpa' wipe the big tear frae my e'e,
An' lift me wi' a cheery smile upon his manly knee,
An' tell me curious stories 'boot some haunted castle wa',
Wi' starin' een an' open mou'—I hearkened tae them a'.

He told me aft hoo Wallace brave defied the Southern shock,
An' stood the brunt o' battle on Dumbarton's Castle rock;
An' hoo the good King Robert, when his bluidy wars were past,
Lay quietly doon at Cardross and slowly breathed his last.

An' hoo the valiant Douglas, wi' his noble little band,
Tried wi' the gallant Bruce's heart to reach the "Holy Land,"
Till, fightin' gainst the haughty Moors, the good Sir James was slain,
An' carried back to Scotland from the bloody field of Spain.

When he spoke o' Scotia's victories his face wid beam wi' glee,
But the very thocht o' Flodden brocht the tear-drap tae his e'e;
An' a cloud o' deepest sadness wid settle on his face
As he told the mournful story o' the hapless Stuart race.

An' he'd speak o' Lomon' mountains whaur an ootlaw band aince trod,
Committin' crime, an' plunderin' 'neath the watchful eye o' God;
An' hoo the great Macgregors spread terror a' aroon,
Until in deadly combat they met the fierce Colquhoun.

Then he'd weep ower his past errors, an' sadly say tae me,
"Be a true an' upricht laddie if an honest man ye'd be;
Respect your puirest neighbour, assist him noo an' then,
For simple acts o' kindness mark true God-fearin' men."

So I've tried to dae my duty in the worl' o' pain an' strife;
I ha'e been upricht an' honest, though I've had my fauts through life;
An' soon my soul shall pass awa' beyond this worl' o' grievin',
An' my corpse lie in the kirkyaird, near the bonnie banks o' Leven.

LAMENT ON LEAVING THE VALE OF LEVEN.

Roon Alexandria an' Bonhill,
Oh, 'tis a lovely scene;
Wi' beauteous hills on every side,
The waters flow between.
Frae big dye-works, an' hard-wrocht lads,
An' lassies clean an' braw,
To seek a fortune 'yont the sea,
I sune maun haste awa'.

Fair Lomon', queen o' Scotia's lakes,
It grieves me sair to lea'
Thy beauteous haunts an' far-famed scenes
For lands unknown tae me.
Calm o'er thy peaceful bosom noo
The e'ning shadows fa',
As wi' a sad, sad he'rt I turn
To hasten far awa'.

Blythe simmer 'oors shall deck wi' flo'ers
The breist o' steep Carman;
Whaur in the innocence o' youth
My first sweet joys began.
Majestic Lomon', towerin' high,
Thy pure white cap o' snaw
Shall melt beneath the simmer sky
When I am miles awa'.

But oh ! my loving-hearted mates,
Haud freenship ties aye dear ;
Though time works mony a curious change
Frae weary year tae year.
An' if ye muse on bygone days,
An' playmates' names reca',
Pray mention mine among the lave,
Though I am far awa'.

If fortune shall my efforts croon,
Some bonnie simmer morn
I'll come back tae my native toon,
Tae dee whaur I wis born ;
Near Lomon's fair historic scenes,
'Mang freens an' cronies a',
Tae rest my weary banes in peace,
When life has passed awa'.

* * *

TO A CHILD PLAYING ON CARDROSS SHORE.

Sport on, sport on, my little child,
Enjoy life while you can,
And never sigh for future years
To crown you as a man.
For manhood years bring manhood cares,
And manhood joys are few ;
All I possess I'd freely give
To be again like you.

So young, so beautiful, so fair,
With merry, sparkling eyes,
Thou findest pleasure everywhere
Beneath the sunny skies.
In reckless glee thou sport'st to-day,
Afraid not that to-morrow
May mar thy dearest childish hopes,
And cloud thy life with sorrow.

Build up thy castles of sea sand,
Around them laugh and play,
For see the tide is near at hand
To wash them all away.
Sigh not though they are swept from sight,
Restrain thy foolish tears,
And train thy heart to bear the ills
That come with future years.

Once in the years, far distant now,
I roved a child like thee,
And built my mighty castles up,
While musing by the sea.
But with the dawn of darker days
Severely I was tried,
For all my mad, ambitious hopes
Fell to the ground and died.

And so may thine, my happy child ;
Perhaps thou soon wilt know
That one false step in human life
May lead to utter woe.

Though in the purity of youth
All innocent you stand,
The tempter may be hovering near,
To seize thee by the hand.

And when, bowed down with manhood's cares,
You look o'er life's dull track,
Where you have trod from youth to age,
And ne'er can travel back,
Then will you sigh for that glad day
You watched the rising tide,
And built your castles, when a child,
By Cardross on the Clyde.

* * *

AN AULD MAN'S LAMENT.

Oh! sweet the simmer smiles
Over Lomon's sunny isles,
On ilka field the flo'ers are bloomin' fair;
But the joys that used to be
Hae for ever gone frae me,
An' I'm a little laddie never mair.

Still the dear auld hills look doon
On oor busy little toon,
An' the Leven murmurs onward tae the Clyde;
But my wife, sae guid an' kin',
Death took awa' langsyne,
An' I wish that I wis sleepin' by her side.

For nae comfort can age claim
In this sair neglected hame,
Dependin' on the bite that ithers gie
Wi' a grudge, an' wi' a growl,
Ony puir auld helpless soul
Wid be better deid than leeve the life o' me.

Oh ! aince did I inherit
An independent spirit,
An' frae a frien' nae favour wid I court ;
But there cam a fatal 'oor
When my twa airms lost their poo'er,
An' I fell upon my children for support.

So I trust the Lord abune
'll see the plight I'm in,
An' my children o' their burden set them free ;
Then I'll reach that glorious shore
Where taunts are heard no more,
An' feel the joy earth never held for me.

* * *

JOCK AND JEAN.

"GET up, you lazy, drunken jaud, an' sort the hoose a wee,
Is this the comfort a' men get when they come hame for tea ?
The fire oot, the window shut, the weans as black as taur ;
Instead o' gettin' better, Jean, each day you're gettin' waur.

"Guid peety oor puir helpless bairns in sic a wretched hame,
Indeed, the very thocht o' them micht gar you blush wi' shame.
I canna bear the sicht o' them, as through the streets they go,
For weel I ken they're naething but a perfect ootside show.

"They hae nae mither's kindly haun's tae mak' them snod and braw,
Tae wash their face, and caim their hair, like ithers in the raw;
An', wife, the very look o' you 'll set me ravin' mad,
Tae think that ane I lo'ed sae dear wid gang sae tae the bad.

"Nae winner when I musin' sit I aye reca' tae min'
Oor happy, happy coortin' days, gane in the sweet langsyne,
When smilin' on my breist you lay an' fondly did agree
That in a little cottage hame a happy pair we'd be.

"Then you were young an' bonnie like, an' modest, blythe, an' clean,
An' in the kintry-side a' roon they ca'd you Tidy Jean;
But things are sairly altered noo, there's aye some change in life,
And aft a mighty difference 'tween the sweetheart and the wife.

"When oor misguided bairns grow up, whit path will they pursue?
You ken, the richt yin frae the wrang they ne'er were taught by you.

Wi' hert-felt joy abune their graves, oh, gladly wid I trample
E'er I could bear tae see them leeve an' follow your example.

"Men, alas, aft mak' a bargain they sune begin tae rue,
An', faith, it has been sae wi' me, I'm lang since tired o' you;
So, Lord, protect oor little bairns, for them I'm gaun tae lea',
Tae seek for future happiness beyont the ragin' sea."

Then puir Johnnie sank in silence, big tears coursed doon his cheek,
And Jeanie, nearly sober, in grief began tae speak:—
"I hae been a wretched wumin, kept you in domestic strife,
Been a sour, ill-natured hussie, an' made you tired o' life.

"I hae yielded to temptation, been tae drink an easy prey,
Pity me, a simple wumin, easy led frae virtue's way;
I've neglected a' hoose duty, treated cautions wi' disdain,
Little kennin', little carin', hoo I caused oor bairnies pain.

"On my knees I swear, dear Johnnie, by the help o' Him above,
I'll become again a wumin worthy o' your tender love;
I'll aye keep the hoose in order, mak' the bairnies snod an' braw,
Treat them wi' a mither's kindness, if you winna gang awa."

Roon his neck she flung her airms, doon her cheeks the big tears ran,
Soothed she her saft-hearted husband, as a wumin only can.
Johnnie kissed her cheek, and answered—tears yet staunin' in his een—
"If you'll truly keep your promise, never will I lea' you, Jean!"

Noo within a tidy cottage, free frae a' domestic strife,
Sit a happy-he'rted husband and a bonnie, blushin' wife,
Lookin' at their sportive children, dressed a' tidy, neat, an' clean;
Wha wid think that happy couple aince wis wretched Jock an' Jean?

◆ ◆ ◆

THE VALE OF LEVEN'S VICTORY.

For years I will remember that great and glorious day
When the "steak" of Alexandria beat the Renton "chicken brae";
For scarce a lad in Leven that joyous night did fail
To celebrate the victory o' the laddies frae the Vale.

At goal young Jamie Wilson had a heap o' wark that day,
And far-famed Johnny Forbes showed the Renton hoo tae play;
Wee Whitelaw and big Murray were sharp upon the ba',
But yon callan ca'd M'Lachlan fairly beat them one an' a'.

So I'm prood, my hardy laddies o' Alexandria toon,
That your noble perseverance brought the Renton's record doon;
Stick closely a' thegither, and dinna boast like some,
And success may still attend you in the days that are tae come.

SMOLLETT'S BAY.

THE flo'ers are sweetly bloomin' an' noddin' on the lea,
The birds are blithely singin' on ilka leafy tree,
As lanely by the Lomon' I wander sad an' wae,
To muse upon the laddie that was droon'd in "Smollett's Bay."

Oh, bonnie was my laddie, his he'rt was licht and true;
His face was bright and sunny, his een were large and blue,
An' through yon bonnie woodlan's I wandered blythe and gay
Wi' the rosy-cheeked laddie that was droon'd in "Smollett's Bay."

Noo lane and broken-hearted I wander through the "Vale,"
An' weep when on the Lomon' I see a tiny sail;
For aye it brings to memory the horrors o' that day
When my bonnie printer laddie was droon'd in "Smollett's Bay."

My mither ca's me foolish, and says, "Ye ha'e nae need
Tae mourn sae lang an' sadly for yin that's cauld and deid;
Ye've plenty ither suitors, jist hark tae whit they say,
An' forget that puir bit callan' that lies droon'd in "Smollett's Bay."

But no; though lairds an' merchants, wha boast their wealth an' land,
Should pleading kneel before me to win my he'rt an' hand,
To a' their sweet proposals I'd bravely answer "Nay,"
For my he'rt lies wi' the laddie that was droon'd in "Smollett's Bay."

FAREWEEL, FAREWEEL TAE FERENEZE!

The shades o' nicht begin tae fa',
An' sadly moans the e'ening breeze,
As wearily I turn awa'
Frae my dear hame by Fereneze.

Chorus—

O Fereneze! steep Fereneze!
O fair, enchanted Fereneze!
How will I spend my life awa'
Frae dear beloved Fereneze!

Glenkilloch I nae mair may see,
Nor wander 'neath its shady trees,
Nor lie whaur stood the kissin'-tree
Upon the braes o' Fereneze.

The lassie that I lo'ed sae dear,
The lass I did my best tae please,
Oh! sadly will she grieve tae hear
I'm gaun awa' frae Fereneze.

Then, frien's an' cronies, fare-ye-weel!
When I am far ayont the seas
May I find hearts as kind and leal
As those I leave by Fereneze!

THE RENTON FOOTBALL CLUB'S VICTORY.

To-NIGHT the conqueror's banner in Renton town's unfurled
To welcome home their heroes, the champions of the world;
The band in triumph playing—the busy stir's began—
And the fire of victory's blazing on the braes of old Carman.

Hurrah! Great gifted Renton, thy glorious spreading name
Shall live throughout all ages on the scroll of football fame;
May the rising generation of your far-famed little town
Add to the hard-won laurels that to them you're handing down.

For we, as honest Scotchmen, should honour and admire
The hardy lads we've reared and trained in old Dumbartonshire;
And when you meet the Preston team, be careful how you play,
And beat them, as you played and beat your Southern foes to-day.

* * *

THE FLOWER O' WATERSIDE.

THE Midge-hole Glen, frae en' to en',
I wander sad and weary,
Whaur happy oors I used to spen'
In simmer wi' my deary.

An', as the cheerless moments pass,
My wounded hert I chide
For pairtin' wi' the bonnie lass,
The flower o' Waterside.

Thou mopin' owl in yonder shaw
Call forth the midnicht fairy,
Tae banish those dull clouds awa'
That hing 'twixt me and Mary.
Awake, ye weary feathery host
That 'mongst the trees abide,
An' mourn wi' me, for I ha'e lost
The flower o' Waterside.

Too deep o' love the young he'rt drinks;
We dreamed to be united,
When, by the bonnie Levern Links,
Oor youthfu' vows were plighted.
But gossip tongues did part us twain—
Oor he'rts ha'e drifted wide;
Oh! may you soon return again,
Dear flower o' Waterside.

But look! the clouds ha'e cleared awa',
An' Mary's come back noo;
Her face is still as blythe an' braw,
Her he'rt as staunch an' true.
A joyous licht beams in her e'e,
She vows to be my bride;
So never mair we'll pairted be,
Dear flower o' Waterside.

DEFEATED.

My poor, fallen townsmen, are thy victories all o'er?
Will our busy streets ring with thy triumphs no more?
Must thy name in oblivion forever be cast,
And thy fame be rehearsed as a thing of the past?

Ye were reared as your fathers were reared up together,
Ye breathe the same air from the sweet mountain heather,
Ye tread the same paths, ye bear the same name,
But ye lack the true courage that led them to fame.

For great were the feats by your forefathers done,
The honours they left you they nobly had won,
But when ye should have made them your guard and your guide,
Like a thing that was worthless, ye cast them aside.

* * *

MY FIRST ATTEMPT.

Oor land is sair troubled wi' poets jist noo,
And editors sadly oppress't;
So I've nae need to wait or e'en hesitate
To torment the puir deils like the rest.

When a struggling young poet's aspirin' to soar,
He sweetly an' modestly sings,
Till the critic oot hops, then the puir bardling drops
Like a bird when 'tis shot through the wing.

An' so it may be wi' a rhmyer like me,
But, freends, I am happy to tell,
If my products o' study please nae ither body,
They aye hae a charm for mysel'.

The existence o' man is a droll thing to scan,
As we battle an' fight for a name;
Life's brae is sae steep, we aft fa' asleep,
An' ne'er get to the summit o' fame.

When I sleep 'neath the swaird, in the village kirkyaird,
If ye editors by my grave tread,
Don't say wi' a sneer, "A poet lies here—
And one more tormentor is dead!"

◆ ◆ ◆

THE SONG OF THE TOILERS.

A BRIGHT day shall yet dawn for Scotland,
When Rank, like a pillar of sand,
Shall be swept by the storm that is brewing
Away from the shores of our land.

For Worth shall be throned as our ruler
When Learning and Wisdom hold sway,
And titled born knaves of the nation
Shall become, like ourselves, common clay.

Ye gold-gifted gods of the ages!
Build fortunes by starving the poor,
But hard work for poor, paltry wages
Is more than we're fit to endure.

Arise, ye brave sons of true freemen!
And gird on bright Justice's sword,
Let the storm of your wrath burst in fury
To crush down the power of each lord.

Unfurl the bright banner of Freedom
On the uppermost height of the land,
And down with the cowardly caitiffs
Who for justice and right fear to stand.

* * *

THE BURNS ANNIVERSARY.

Again, with songs and sounds of joy,
We hail the glorious morn
When, underneath an old thatched roof,
Our patriot Bard was born.
And back, in Fancy's golden dreams,
The form, long passed to clay,
Returns to grace our festive boards
And thrill our hearts to-day.

I see the "Daisy's" hapless fate,
The "Mouse" in trembling flight,
The weary "Cottar" hameward plod
In peace to spend the night.
"The Twa Dogs" set in converse deep,
The quarrelling "Brigs o' Ayr,"
And drunken "Shanter," demon chased,
Upon his "tailless mare."

"The Jolly Beggars" laughing talk
Aboot the "Holy Fair";
And "Doctor Hornbook," met by "Death,"
Breathes "Holy Willie's Prayer."
Then "Rantin' Robin's" heart o' glee
By sorrow's shaft is riven,
For in a vision he doth see
His "Mary" pass to Heaven.

O, sturdy peasant, born to plough
The field of Scottish song;
To earn thy bread with sweating brow
Amid the toiling throng;
Where Scotchmen tread thy fame doth spread,
And while this planet turns,
The children of the mighty dead
Shall praise the name of Burns.

* * *

TO A LITTLE BIRD.

Bonnie, blythesome, sweet wee sangster,
Pour oot thy notes o' glee;
Entranced, wi' joy unspeakable,
I lingering hark tae thee.
There's pathos sweet in ilka note
The ear delights tae greet,
For simmer's ever in thy voice,
Wee feathery minstrel sweet.

My troubled soul you saftly soothe ;
I thank the Lord o' a'
For giftin' earth wi' sich as thee
Tae sing my cares awa'.
You rouse new vigour in my hert
Tae battle 'gainst life's wrang,
An' purer thochts plant in my mind
Wi' thy sweet heaven-born sang.

Wee bird, when singin' on that tree,
Perchance my looks you scan,
Tae search for human pity in
The dark, deep hert o' man.
Beware! yon prowlin' youth wha strays
By Leven's murmurin' river,
Wi' barb-edged stane an' steady aim
May stop thy sang forever.

Last year, upon that tree you're on,
A wee bird wooed its mate,
Sweet were its sangs an' fu' o' love,
But O, sad, sad its fate.
A missile frae a cruel haun'
Sped through the leafy tree,
An' lifeless fell the singer doon
Upon the flo'ery lea.

I took it up, I cursed the wretch
Wha could sae cruel be,
An' as the bluid drapped frae its breist,
The tears drapped frae my e'e.

I laid it here, an' wi' fresh leaves
  Its cauld wee form did cleid,
Then, turnin', left the leevin' bird
  Lamentin' ower the deid.

Next morn I cam' wi' waefu' he'rt;
  The leaves were thrust awa',
An' whaur I left the murdered bird
  Its mate lay deid an' a'.
I buried them by yonder tree,
  A daisy 'bune them waves,
An' thou, sweet minstrel, day by day,
  Art singin' ower their graves.

Perchance they were twa mates o' thine,
  Perchance you saw them dee,
Perchance 'tis for that kindly act
  You sing sae sweet tae me.
We are baith creatures o' yae God,
  O, frae me fear nae wrang,
But ower thy wee companions' graves
  Sing on, sing sweet thy sang.

◆ ◆ ◆

THE LEVEN MAIDEN'S FATE.

On a blythe young simmer mornin',
  In the days lang, lang awa,
Wandered, weepin' by the Leven,
  Broken-hearted Mary Shaw,

And moaning in her anguish,
"Oh, happy could I dee,
For my bonnie sailor laddie's
At the bottom o' the sea."

The saft wind sighed in sorrow,
"Forgi'e me, maiden fair,
If blindly, in my anger,
I cost you a' your care.
I'd search the endless ocean,
If the po'er but lay wi' me,
An' bring back your bonnie laddie
Frae the bottom o' the sea."

Chirped a new-hame bird o' passage,
"Resting on that doomed ship's mast
Your laddie sadly murmured
As he bravely faced the blast—
'Tell my bonnie Leven lassie,
If to Scotia's shore you flee,
That a truer hert went never
Tae the bottom o' the sea."

Sobbed a wee bit bashfu' gowan,
Keekin' up a' wat wi' dew—
"Sweet sister, pierced wi' sorrow,
Let me sympathise wi' you.
For your dreams o' golden promise
Ha'e been sairly knocked agee
Wi' the mighty howlin' tempest
An' the cruel, hungry sea."

Then sadly moaned the maiden—
"Blacker grows my dark despair;
For each simple word of pity
Mak's my burden worse to bear.
Sae dear I lo'ed my laddie,
That my life I'd gladly gi'e
To be lyin' quietly wi' him
At the bottom o' the sea."

Then spoke the treacherous river,
As it smoothly flowed along,
"Fairest, sweetest earthly creature,
Hearken to my soothin' song.
There's peace in my soft bosom
For a hapless maid like thee,
An' I'll bear you to your laddie
At the bottom o' the sea."

* * *

THE PALTRY POUND PER WEEK.

"Go, low-born, vulgar fellow,
Keep your honeyed words from me,
I'm the daughter of a merchant,
And no poor man's wife I'll be.
You would sweeten my existence,
Confound your nasty cheek;
What could any lady purchase
With a paltry pound per week?

"In this bustling world of fashion
I intend to make my mark,
For with men of wealth and learning
I go spooning in the park.
A fig for youth and beauty,
'Tis £ s. d. I seek,
Not a little dingy cottage
And a paltry pound per week.

"Sir, keep your humble station,
Make a peasant girl your wife,
Ambition, mocking, prompts you
To a higher sphere of life.
I was born to be a lady,
Thou a poor, mean, toiling sneak
That must drudge throughout existence
For a paltry pound per week."

The toiling lad, disgusted,
Thrust that empty jade aside,
And through years of perseverance
Prospered in all things he tried.
His soul was roused to action
By that worthless woman's freak,
Thus he made himself possessor
Of a good few pounds per week.

Success still smiling on him
Kept his energy on fire,
And his feet on Fortune's ladder
Went on daily mounting higher.

Now, through careful speculations,
His fortune, truth to speak,
He has built up to its thousands—
Once a paltry pound per week.

But the maiden, wretched creature—
Her father, for some fraud,
Took a moonlight trip one evening,
Some say to parts abroad—
She, spurned by all who knew her,
In silence eats the leek;
She now would take the offer
Of a paltry pound per week.

So, maidens, don't be saucy
If a husband you'd secure,
Take the first good honest offer,
Though the giver may be poor.
For a true and thrifty woman,
That is loving, kind, and meek,
Can work wonders in a household
With a paltry pound per week.

◆ ◆ ◆

A REPLY TO "BILLY."

(An anonymous correspondent who sent me a few complimentary verses.)

Dear Billy, I ha'e read your rhyme,
And feth I think it up to time,

Though, like my ain, it whiles does stammer
A wee beyont the rules o' grammar.
But what o' that? it's kindly spoken,
And weel conveys your friendly token;
And, sir, I'm prood that screeds frae me
To one at least doth pleasure gie,
For yon infernal, haverin' gang
Wha merc'less treat the sons o' sang
Declare we waste oor leisure time
By stuffin' nonsense up in rhyme;
But gin a' cheils wad dae nae worse
Than clink a hamely, haltin' verse,
'Twould be a grand and glorious boon
To mony a hoosewife in the toon.
But ceevil, kind, weel-wishin' Bill,
I ne'er daur hope wi' poet skill
To climb Parnassus' lofty hill.
Though it has tempting summits fair,
What stings and disappointments sair
The struggling muse must patient bear
Before it finds a footing there!
And e'en when glory croons the name,
What great reward is gained by fame?
Na, na, cool Wisdom's voice I'll heed,
And ne'er attempt too great a deed.
But if some nicht you'd quietly tak'
A walk doon by, and gie's your crack,
We'll welcome you at oor fire-en'
As kindly as your dearest frien'.

And if ye hae twa oors to spare,
And taste oor humble Scottish fare,
I'll tak' "immortal Rabbie" doon,
And a' his choicest lyrics croon;
Or read frae Will—great tragic sire—
Or gifted Byron's keen satire;
Or some sweet ancient ballad rhyme,
That we may spend a pleasant time.
So if wi' me you'd like to meet,
Should you e'er ca' at "Random Street,"
Look for the new twa-storey laun,
'Boot fifty yards up frae the "pawn";
Come through the close straucht tae the stair,
A dark broon coloured door is there,
Don't hesitate, but knock and tell
You've came to visit—Hugh Caldwell.

* * *

NAN'S NEW GOON.

'Twas in a year o' strife and woe when nocht was guid nor cheap,
The time that drunken Donal' Blue gat jail for stealin' sheep,
There cam' a limpin' pedlar to auld Dumbarton toon,
And bargained wi' oor Nannie 'boot a braw new goon.

Sly Nannie eyed the garment, thocht she, "It's unco gran',
Wi' sic a bonnie, gaudy dress, I ocht to get a man";
Wi' little hesitation she clink'd the siller doon,
And became the prood possessor o' the braw new goon.

The village belles on Sawbath declared in haughty rage
The dress looked quite ridiculous on ane o' Nannie's age;
But a' the weel-dressed laddies oor door cam' flockin' roon',
Completely fascinated wi' Nan's new goon.

Sune hame frae foreign service cam' oor sodger brither Dan;
Quoth he, "I've brocht a husband to my saucy sister Nan";
He handed her a "puggy," and hoped she'd wed it soon;
She struck in a fury for touchin' her new goon.

The "puggy" socht a corner, and quately nursed its pain,
While wicked schemes for vengeance were formin' in its brain;
It saw she prized her garment, and marked the ugly froon
She gi'ed to ilka person that tampered wi' the goon.

Yae cauld, dull, drizzly e'ening Nan hung the goon to dry
Upon a cord that crossed the hoose; it caught the "puggy's eye,
And "puggy" quately chuckled, "When a' are sleepin' soun'
I'll square accoonts wi' Nannie through her braw new goon."

Noo, Dan had learned the "puggy" some very dangerous capers,
And aft 'twould licht and smoke Dan's pipe and burn his useless papers;
Sae when the hoose in quateness lay, it took the matches doun,
And very sune in bleezes had oor Nan's new goon.

My mither waukened wi' a start, for she was like to choke,
And lood she cried to Dan and Nan the hoose was fu' o' smoke;
When Nannie reached the kitchen she near sank in a swoon
To see the burnin' raiment was her braw new goon.

She spied the tricky "puggy" wi' the matches in its paw,
And wi' an awfu' scraich she blamed the "puggy" for it a';
She raised the heavy poker and smashed the beastie's croon
Till it died beside the embers o' the braw new goon.

Dan lang shall mourn his "puggy," and Nan her loss deplore,
For nae mair bonnie laddies come sneakin' roun' the door;
They a' declare that Nannie has murder in her froon
Since she killed the little "puggy" that burned her new goon.

* * *

I CANNA GET A LAD.

I'm a big, stoot, strappin' hizzie, on the verge o' twenty-three;
I'm as modest, neat, and tidy as a country girl could be;
My hame has mony comforts, yet my heart is seldom glad,
And the cause o' a' my sorrow is I canna get a lad.

I can wash, knit, darn, and bake, patch claes and scrub a flair;
Cook a dizen different dishes for a nobleman and mair;
Work the best ten-fingered dochter ever Scottish mither had,
And I dinna ken the reason that I shouldna get a lad.

Big Peggy roun' the corner, "Black Fanny" up the stair,
And soor-faced Sally Sorkins wi' the ginger-coloured hair,
And gabblin' Jenny Jenkins, they're everything that's bad,
Yet I am quate and dacent, and I canna get a lad.

There's lang, lean Tibby Fowler, wha everybody kens,
Her faither some sax years sin' gat jile for stealin' hens;
She's ugly and untidy, and ever puirly clad,
Yet she's haen a dizen offers, and I canna get a lad.

Auld "teethless Jean," the widdy, wi' the funny goggle e'e,
Has buried twa braw husbands, and intends to bury three;
She'll sune wed Johnny Maurley—puir sowl! he must be mad
To coort yon auld dune limmer, and me canna get a lad.

If only "Crookit Chairlie" or bashfu' John M'Nee
Wad mak' a sweet proposal to a thrifty lass like me,
I'd brichten up his hoosie, and never mak' him sad,
For the dreary garret waits me if I canna get a lad.

◆ ◆ ◆

HOOCH FOR HOGMANAY!

Though you are auld an' frail, guidwife,
Your e'e doth brichtly glance
To hear the lads an' lassies hooch
When whirlin' through the dance;
I see the fiddle o'er your limbs
Still hauds its ancient sway;
So tak' my arm, we'll join the sport,
For this is Hogmanay!

Noo, Bauldy, pass the bottle roun';
Kate, follow wi' the bun;
We must support the inner man
If we'd keep up the fun.

Then Jamie Doo, wi' vigour new,
Will gar the fiddle play,
An' ilka lad loup to his feet,
Wi' "Hooch for Hogmanay!"

'Tis mony a year since you and I
Oor dancin' po'ers did test;
At kirns an' rockin's then, guidwife,
We held oot wi' the best;
But time has wracked an' wrinkled us,
We're fast gaun' doun the brae;
Let oor auld hearts dirl wi' delicht
At "Hooch for Hogmanay!"

Come, laddies, whurl your pairtners roun',
Keep up the noisy mirth;
A smiling face wi' happy heart's
The grandest sicht on earth.
An' as ye joke, an' laugh, an' shout,
An' a your airts display,
Gi'e ilka lass a hearty kiss
That asks for Hogmanay!

An' ye young, modest, blushin' queens
Wi' lovin' glances try
To captivate the laddies' hearts
Afore the year goes by.
Let prudence then your course direct
In a' ye do an' say,
An' ye may dance your bridal dance
When next comes Hogmanay!

An' you an' I, my auld guidwife,
Though totterin' to oor end,
I'll tak' a share o' ilka joy
Kind Providence doth send,
For man an' woman ne'er were made
To mourn, though auld an' grey,
So let us to the dance again
Wi' "Hooch for Hogmanay!"

* * *

MY AULD HE'RT'S IN SCOTLAND.

Hoo could you ask me, Johnny,
Ayont the seas to gang,
Whan 'midst these lordly mountains
I've leeved content sae lang?
Nae ither country's beauty
Could charm my aged e'e;
For my auld he'rt's in Scotland,
And nae place else can be.

I couldna lea' yon kirkyaird,
Whaur oor wee lammies sleep,
For a' the gowd an' riches
That lure folk ower the deep.
O, gin I tried the ocean,
My he'rt wud break to see
The big blue waves dividin'
My wee deid bairns and me.

See yonder lofty mountain, John—
  It's bonnie cap o' snaw
When golden simmer comes, John,
  Will daily dwine awa';
And sae the change you ask, John,
  Wad act the same on me,
For my auld he'rt's in Scotland,
  And nae place else can be.

* * *

A MARRIED MAN'S SONG.

I STOPPED the wild carousin'
  O' a rovin' single life,
And settled doun fu' couth'ly
  Wi' a douce, kind-hearted wife.
And sune to charm oor hoosie,
  And croon oor lives wi' glee,
There cam' a bonnie bairnie,
  And I hobble it on my knee.

Ilk nicht an honest neebour,
  Or a frien', comes drappin' in;
The wife relates the wonders
  Oor unco bairn has dune—
Tells hoo he rocks the cradle.
  And attempts to catch a flee,
And rides a mile a minute
  On his lovin' papa's knee.

When washed and put to bed at nicht,
He winna sleep ava,
But catch my haun's and sign me
To mak' rabbits on the wa';
He bow-wow's like a doggie
When the bunnies he doth see,
But winna sleep unless I tak'
And rock him on my knee.

Thus life in oor wee but-and-ben
Jogs on frae day to day,
And though we maunna daur to hope
Sic bliss will last for aye,
We trust the crookit ways o' life
Will bricht and pleasant be
To the bonnie little bairnie
I hobble on my knee.

◆ ◆ ◆

A LITTLE SONGSTER.

A LITTLE songster from a moorland bare
Rose sweetly singing to the sunny skies;
His tender cadence thrilled the summer air,
And reached earth's lone ones, who, with glad surprise,
Found, in this weary life of toil and throng,
The soothing influence of a song.

Still soared the minstrel, and his noble strain
Touched hearts that music ne'er before had stirred,
And lesser singers humbly on the plain
Stood listening to the higher gifted bird,
And up in heaven the grand immortals heard
The sweet-voiced singer drawing nigh and nigher,
Till glory's golden portals God unbarred,
And bade him enter to the perfect choir.
But though from earth to heaven he early bounded,
He left our song-world richer than he found it.

* * *

SOCIAL MEETING AND PRESENTATION.

On a recent evening Mr. William Jardine, Alexandria, who leaves shortly for America, was entertained by his fellow-workers, and presented with a very handsome chain and appendage. Mr. James M'Gowan, foreman of the department, occupied the chair, and in making the presentation referred in high terms to the many excellent qualities of the guest of the evening, and expressed the hope that he would be successful in the land of the Stars and Stripes. Mr. Jardine suitably acknowledged the gifts and good wishes of his work-mates. Song and sentiment followed, and a most enjoyable and profitable evening was spent by all present; those who were absent missed a splendid night's enjoyment. The following poem was recited by Mr. Caldwell :—

Frae Leven's bonnie fertile Vale,
Frae frien's an' cronies a',
Fair Fortune wi' its gowden smile's
Enticin' you awa';

An' foreign lan's for willin' han's
  Rich harvests yet possess ;
God speed you on your journey, Will,
  An' croon you wi' success.

May health an' happiness be thine
  When toilin' 'yont the "blue,"
An' may you prosper, honest Will,
  In a' things you pursue.
May foreign folk wi' kindly he'rts
  In frien'ship clasp your han',
An' welcome you as a' men should,
  A stranger in their lan'.

So, farewell, manly-he'rted mate,
  God bless you whaur you gang,
An' guard you wi' His loving han'
  Frae ilka thing that's wrang.
An' gin to Leven you come back,
  Rich, or without a fardin',
Wi' open arms we'll welcome thee,
  Dear, honest Willie Jardine.

◆ ◆ ◆

TO ALEXANDER ANDERSON.

O, HONOURED Sandy Anderson,
  Kirkconnel's gifted bard,
To thee a humble toilin' son
  Doth send his best regard.

For dear auld Scotland's hamely *Friend*
Has bound me sae to you,
That it ilk week, frae start to end,
I search for something new
Frae honoured Sandy Anderson.

I've heard 'twas on the busy line,
'Mid noise o' railway carriage,
That ye gi'ed to the glorious "Nine"
Yer heart an' han' in marriage.
The products o' that lofty love
Prood wad I be to claim,
For nocht in Scotland stan's above
The pure, unspotted name
O' noble Sandy Anderson.

O, lang may you be spared to sing,
An' I be pleased to listen,
An' when your spirit taketh wing
To whaur there's nocht but blessin',
I ken that in some auld kirkyaird,
Wi' sorrow-streamin' eyes,
Your country's sons 'll stan' head bared,
An' murmur low—"Here lies
Auld Scotland's Sandy Anderson."

KATE TO JOCK.

(Supposed to be the advice which a young woman gives to her sweetheart before introducing him to her parents.)

Jock, when you come to see me,
Though touched wi' bashfu' shame,
Knock at the door—I'll let you in,
An' tell oor folks your name.
They'll greet you wi' a kindly smile;
Perchance the bairns 'll stare
An' giggle as they see you led
Towards the big arm-chair.

But, Johnnie, should they glower at you,
Ye maunna wear a booce,
Nor stare aroon' wi' open mou'
At a' things i' the hoose.
Sit juist as if you were at hame,
Yer tongue frae prattlin' tether,
Lest the auld folk be led to think
You're juist a sort o' blether.

If faither talks on politics,
Wi' him you maun agree;
Should he ca' richt what you think wrang,
Jock, his way let it be.
Contrive to mak' him understaun'
He is a wondrous man;
An' gin he but attempt a joke,
Lauch hearty if ye can.

An' as the cracky oors slip by,
Become a wee mair free ;
An' dinna hesitate, if asked,
To tak a cup o' tea.
When placed before the scones an' cakes,
Your senses a' awaken ;
An', though you scarcely tak' a bite,
Praise weel my mither's bakin'.

When tea is ower, perchance the crack
May drift to something holy ;—
Put on a solemn Sunday face,
And listen to their story.
Say "yes" or "no" juist as it suits,
An' in a word whiles drap ;
An' they'll baith think their dochter's choice
An honest, upricht chap.

But when the bairnies mak' for bed,
Oor auld roon clock will show
That if you would keep elders' oors
Ye maun prepare to go.
Rise an' express hoo much you felt
Delighted wi' their crack,
An' nae doot, as you bid "guid nicht,"
They'll baith invite you back.

I'll to the lobby gang wi' you—
We'll put oor lips thegither,
An', lauchin', whisper hoo you've pleased
My faither an' my mither.

An', Johnnie, in the years to come,
If true love wi' us dwells,
Some braw lad, wi' a lass o' oors,
May act sae wi' oorsells.

* * *

THE CLEANING DAY.

O, WAE's me on the cleanin' day, its torture weel I ken,
For upside-doon wi' muckle din it turns oor but-an'-ben,
A meenit's pleasure in the hoose I'm no allowed to hae,
For ilka time I turn mysel' I'm tauld I'm in the way.
The wife, juist sweatin' at her work, a meenit canna spare,
The half-drest bairnies like wee sweeps lie skirlin' on the flair;
There's neither pot nor pan at haun' a tasty bite to mak',
What's easiest got an' quickest cooked for dinner I maun tak';
An' if I daur turn up my nose or say a word amiss;
The wife cries, "What could you expect at sic a time as this?"
An' weel I wat she speaks the truth, I've little need to bark
An' grumble at discomforts when she's doing needfu' wark.
But sune the hurry-scurry's by, an', wi' a pleasant face,
Again up in the ingle-neuk I tak' my honoured place,
The hoosie has a brighter look, the bairnies blyther play:
An' proodly do I praise the wife for her gran' cleanin' day.

LOCH LOMOND REGATTA.

To-DAY, in Alexandria toon,
Folk free frae toil an' worry,
Wi' clean white shirts an' polished shoon,
Ha'e set aff in a hurry!
Hundreds, too, croodin' frae the train,
Who've cam' frae various places,
An', feth, Loch Lomon' road ha'e ta'en,
To see the gran' boat races
Up there this day.

Noo every boat frae Balloch's oot,
An' every tub; my certy,
To-day there's nae time for dispute
Wi' Whig and Tory pairty.
But hoo oor politicians 'gree
In oor learned Hoose o' Commons,
An ample specimen we'll see
Wi' "drunks" on fair Loch Lomon's
Braw shores this day.

O, a' ye scientists wha explore
Men's souls by face inspection,
Come up at ance to Lomon' shore—
Ye'll fin' a gran' collection.
There's scores o' win' bags, alias blaws,
Wild youths an' dandy lassies,
An' forward women, jist because
They ne'er miss ocht that passes
Up here this day.

There's paltry clerks wi' stylish coats,
  There's swaggerin' blades ca'ed bruisers,
Wi' velvet caps an' big "pea knots,"
  An' ugly bell-mouthed trousers.
There's spongin' chiels wi' scorchin' mooths—
  Lod, judging by their faces,
Gin' they in Lomon' quench their drooths
  I fear we'll see nae races
    This blessed day.

There's tempting tea stan's, carts o' fruit,
  An' baskets fu' o' sweeties,
An', gin yer purse ye daur tak' oot,
  Ye'll taste whit like a treat is.
The foolish youths wha saved their cash
  For this day are na sparin' it,
They fling't awa' on worthless trash
  Mair willin' than they earn it,
    Up here this day.

But I maun stop this wild harangue—
  The boats are in their places;
An' roun' the "wee pier" people thrang,
  An' anxious ilk ane's face is.
The signal's gi'en, an' wi' a yell
  We hail oor loved crews startin',
An' cries of "Go it, Isobel,"
  An' "Pull away, Dumbarton,"
    Are heard this day.

On to the buoys fu' fast they speed,
  Syne turn, and, hameward steerin',
The "Young Dumbarton" takes the lead—
  O, listen to the cheerin'!
"Jack Patrick" tries to mend its pace,
  Alas! wi' a' its vigour,
As second only in this race
  Its famous name 'll figure
    Up here this day.

The amateurs at length are oot,
  Some pull wi' pith an' skill;
The ithers—weel, I've little dout
  Could row best doon a hill.
But none can quietly watch this race—
  The shore's alive wi' fightin';
O, let us hasten frae the place,
  Since there's nae mair delight in
    The sports this day.

Here's some puir fellows dreepin' wet
  An' some wi' bleedin' faces,
'Twill be twa days ere they forget
  Loch Lomon's gran' boat races.
Here's some bit striplings, helpless fou,
  Upon the roadside lyin',
An' what left them as they are noo
  There's ithers busy buyin'
    In tents this day.

O, curse those tents, and curse the beer!
The people wad been civil
Had those degraders no' been here
To fill them wi' the devil.
But, O, when next we line the san',
May we fin' pleasant faces,
An' nae vile beer tents be at han'
To spoil oor famous races
Anither day.

◆ ◆ ◆

A MOTHER'S LAMENT.

Fare thee well, dear only daughter,
Loving, gentle, kind, and good;
Called from thy poor, stricken husband
In the bloom of womanhood.
Leaving three wee helpless bairnies
Motherless life's path to tread;
O, that God had spared thee, Martha,
And had taken me instead.

In my grief old friends draw near me,
Kindly words they do not lack;
All they can they do to cheer me,
But they cannot bring thee back.
Thy wee bairns must be my comfort,
They shall have my care and love,
Till I join thee and thy father
In that blessed world above.

NOO MITHER IS AWA'.

O, THE hoose is no' the same
  Since mither gaed awa',
An' I canna think it hame,
  Though it's still as clean an' braw;
For at e'en, when toil is dune,
An' weary we come in,
O, the waesomeness we fin'
  Noo mither is awa'.

Hoo blithely roon' the fire
  She kindly set us a',
An' she never seemed to tire
  Attending ilk ane's ca'.
But, toilin' late an' sair
That her bairns micht better fare,—
O, 'twas that, an' nothing mair,
  Took mither dear awa'.

Weel I min' that morn the mune,
  Wi' its siller licht sae braw,
Oor window keeked in,
  An' the solemn sicht it saw;
For sons an' dochters dear
Had cam' frae far an' near,
The last sweet words to hear
  Frae a mither gaun awa'.

We kissed her ane by ane,
An' vowed, while tears did fa',
We faithfu' wad remain
Though she was ta'en awa'.
Then a glory filled the room,
But it faded, leaving gloom,
For the cauld clay form lay toom—
Oor mither wis awa'.

But some day, by-and-by,
When the Lord thinks fit to ca'
My longing soul on high
To wear the robes like snaw,
In that bricht, celestial land,
'Mid the fair, angelic band,
I shall meet an' clasp the hand
O' mither that's awa'.

* * *

TAMMY AT THE FAIR.

HUMOROUS READING.

At Balloch ilka year a Fair
Is held, whaur showmen buddies
Hae swing-boats fleein' through the air
And muckle wooden cuddies,
And gaudy tents, whose splendours daze
The e'e, sae bricht they're glancin',
While painted hizzies scant o' claes
Are by the doorways dancin'.

Frae there a hundred jumbled soun's
Come floatin' doon the valley
Like bugle calls to Leven loons
At ance to Fairward sally;
And 'mid a crood that's hurryin' there
A masher coof ca'd Tammy
Is struttin' up wi' lordly air
Withoot his guidin' mammy.

The entrance sune he struggles through
Wi' groups that hop like sparrows
Owre dubs that grace the avenue
O' aipple cairts and barrows,
To crooded staun's, whaur yellin' boys,
Wi' tubs and dollies funny,
Urge sportive youths for German toys
To fling awa' their money.

But sune the air wi' music's rent,
And a' is wild confusion,
For some mak' for the circus tent,
And some the "Ghost Illusion";
But, Scotchman-like, Tam rins his e'e
Owre a' the wonders many,
In search o' whit is like to gie
Maist value for his penny.

At length, a wee roon' tent he spied,
Kept by a cunnin' manny,
Wha's tricks douce folk said were envied
By Pandemonium Sanny.

Tam hurried in amang the lave,
And lang in wonder sat,
And when 'twas asked he quickly gave
The loan o' his new hat.

The showman held it up awee,
Then lowered it, and said—
"Young man, in this huge thing I see
You keep more than your head."
So roon' the leather band he wrocht,
And tugged hard at the lining,
Then deftly frae the croon he brocht
A dizzen dishes shining.

The people lauched, amazed was Tam,
At whit the man was fin'in',
Whan forth a feedin' bottle cam'
And heaps o' baby linen;
But, lest the live thing should appear
That owned the long white clothes,
Tam, burning red frae ear to ear,
Quick to his feet arose,

And cried—"The deevil's in the hat,
For nane o' they are mine, sir;
But since o' it I hae got quat
To keep't jist be as kin', sir."
Then aff anither fellow's heid
He pu'ed the hooker-doon,
And oot the door wi' lightning speed
And skelped hame to the toon.

JAMIE M'GRAW.

In the auld toon o' Neilstone leeved Jamie M'Graw,
An' his equal at leein' this warl' never saw,
For marvellous stories he daily wad tell
In which he aye figured as hero himsel',
Till a wheen, tired grown o' this big braggin' pest,
Had plotted to put his great powers to the test.
So they met him one evening in Jean Macindoe's,
A pub near the Cross, scene o' mony a boose.
They ca'd in some liquor, asked Jim to begin
An' tell them the most daring feat e'er he'd dune;
Jim, glad o' the chance, toomed his glass an' began,
So list to the tale o' this wonderful man:—

"Ae cauld nicht last winter across Fereneze
I daunered alane a wheen rabbits to seize;
But doon by yon wood 'neath the auld 'kissin'-tree'
A voice frae the bushes cried loodly to me—
'Haste, haste awa' back to the dark Killoch Glen,
For the witch's brewin' mischief this nicht in her den,
An' her treacherous schemes, Jamie, try an' undo,
For the fate o' auld Neilstone is hangin' on you!'
Dumfoundered I stood, syne the voice cried—'Ha, ha!
Has terror at length seized big Jamie M'Graw?'
I turned an' sped aff to that dark, dismal place,
Peered doon owre a cliff, saw the auld wizen face
O' the witch, as she sat at the edge o' a rock,
Wi' a licht in her haun, an' these words she did croak—

'A dark deidly poison see here I prepare,
An' in white filmy vapour blow it high in the air,
An' cause it to fa' like a thick mist aroon'
Yon place on the hilltop folk ca' Neilstone Toon,
An' its deidly ingredients 'll poison the breath
O' the young an' the auld till they sicken to death;
For its gossipin' women and beer-drinkin' men
Hae sairly misca'd the auld witch o' the glen.'

She ceased, an' the cauld sweat broke oot on my broo,
An', freen's, in an instant my thochts turned to you,
An' doon to the auld he'rtless jaud I did cry—
'The folk o' auld Neilstone I'll save or I'll die.'
Wi' a wild screechin' lauch my brave words she did mock,
An' in frenzy I grupped a huge piece o' rock,
An' wi' strength superhuman I gied it a shoug
Richt doon on the tap o' the auld schemin' hag.
But the force o' the throw did my balance o'erturn,
An' I went doon heid-foremost richt into the burn.
The water was high, an' it bore me awa',
But I swam like a troot owre ilk big waterfa',
Till at last, 'maist exhausted, I grupped the shore
At yon wee bit spring-well by auld Hamilton's door."

He ceased, and the room shook wi' ae ringin' cheer,
Some handed him whisky, some passed owre the beer;
An' loodly they shouted—"Long life to M'Graw,
For his glorious deed saved the lives o' us a'."

Then up to his feet staggered douce Robin Young,
A pawky auld chiel wi' a saft wheedlin' tongue;
An' he said—"Brave M'Graw, you hae made it your boast
That you neither fear man, woman, wizard, nor ghost,
Sae I'm certain the hale warl' wad aye wish you weel
If you'd juist twist the neck o' yon carl ca'd the Deil."

A titterin' arose at this awfu'-like sayin';
But M'Graw, fairly roused wi' the drink he had taen,
Cried oot—"If there be sic a wicked auld chiel
As him whom this wise warl' has christened the Deil,
Let him come forth this nicht frae his cavern's gloom,
An' I'll thraw his tough neck before a' in the room."

He sprang to his feet, but the men a' sat dumb,
For a droll kin' o' rumblin' was heard in the lum;
An' then wi' a thud an' a terrible roar
A gruesome-like being rolled oot on the floor.
It had a wild face, far blacker than soot,
A horn on its heid, a big cloven foot,
A tail that gaed twistin' aboot like a snake,
Wi' a prong on the en' like the tooth o' a rake,
An' its presence o' sulphur had sic a vile smell.
That ilka ane cried—"'Tis the auld Deil himsel'."

Then some made a rush to get oot at the door,
But fell as if stricken to death on the floor;
An' some crouched in terror behint brave M'Graw,
Cryin'—"Jamie, hae pity an' fecht for us a'."

But Jim had scarce looked on the horrible sight
Than crash to the floor he went in a fright.
The ithers got up when they saw M'Graw swoon,
An' wi' whisky and water they sune brocht him roon.
Then auld Robin Young the hale plot did reveal—
"Man, Jamie, we tried you to challenge the Deil,
An' wee Lowrie, there, buskit up for the trick,
Cam' doon the wide vent in the shape o' Auld Nick.
An' the brave way you faced him has satisfied a'
That there's naethin' but win' in big Jamie M'Graw!"

* * *

THE MAN IN THE MOON.

HUMOROUS READING.

Whan I was bit a growin' laddie
I aften stood at nicht wi' daddie
And viewed the moon, while he wad trace
On it the ootlines o' a face
Belangin' to a sonsy carle
Wha leeved at a'e time in this warl',
But wha, my daddie dear did say,
Had gethered sticks on Sawbath Day,
And for that act the graceless loon
Was banished up into the moon.
I stared at daddie, and asked "Why
A sinfu' man was put sae high?

Did folk no fear he'd tumble doon,
Or blaw the licht oot o' the moon ?
An' wis there never ony mae
Did wrang upon the Sawbath Day ?
And whan wis't that he leeved on earth,
And whatna country gave him birth ?"
"Alas ! quo' dad, "I canna tell ;
Gang up and ask the man yoursel'."

And sae I made a big balloon,
And sailed 'wa' up into the moon,
And met that sonsy, ancient carle
Dressed wi' kilt, plaid, and braid Balmoral,
Like some auld Heelan' chieftain grim.
I bared my heid and bowed to him,
And quickly did he grip my haun',
Said—"Welcome, son o' Caledon,
Your mountain land I brawly ken,
Prood am I o' its sturdy men :
For there's nae place o' note on earth
But's filled by ane o' Scottish birth.
E'en yon auld red-faced, lauchin' soul
Perched high upon the frozen Pole
Was ance a spruce young drover chap
On lordly Lomon's rugged tap,
But, drinkin' too much Heelan' toddy,
A fire that kindled in his body
Wad hae consumed him ere this time
Had he no socht a caulder clime.

He aye salutes me noo at nicht
Whan in the moon I set my licht,
Since I by Mason signs revealed
My history to the pawkie chield,
That he his pedigree might trace
Frae me, the faither o' your race.
For, son, whan your braw warl' wis young
Frae Eastern parentage I sprung,
And wrocht a tiller o' the soil
Till a' gat sae corrupt and vile
That Noah, ane o' purer blood,
To purge the earth cried for a flood.
The waters owre the mountains broke,
And drooned like rats the wicked folk.
The wife and I, wi' fear distressed,
Socht refuge in an eagle's nest,
Twa eggs were in't, we bored the shells,
And emptying them crept in oorsel's.
The parent eagles saw the flood,
And screechin' socht their unhatched brood;
And being birds o' a mighty kin',
Whose breed has dwined awa' since syne,
Ilk seized an egg and aff did flee
For weary days owre miles o' sea,
Till baith did doon exhausted drap
On Scotland's monarch mountain tap.

"The floods receded, then we saw
The land, though rugged, bleak, and sma',

Was jist the proper sort o' place
To raise a perseverin' race.
We bigg'd a hut, and syne were cheered
Wi' bonnie bairnies, whom we reared
Till they grew strappin' women, men,
And set aff for themsel's to fen'—
Some fished roon' islands in the North,
Some tilled the land by Clyde and Forth.
Then forests vast their leaves unfurled,
And green and fresher grew the world,
For the grand purifying flood
Had cleansed and sweetened soil and bud.
Then, in my leisure, I began
The glorious firmament to scan,
And study till I understood
What caused the fierce deluging flood.
The moon had, like a startled horse,
Run wildly from its proper course,
And drawn the tides wi' giant staps
Clean owre the grassy mountain taps—
Some ane wad need to mount aboon
And keep a' richt the wayward moon.
I tauld the wife. Quo' she—' Dear San',
For sic a task you are the man.'
So we set to, and did prepare
A car we could propel wi' air,
And in't like lightning we did skim
Up the *First* rainbow's coloured rim

Into that vast ethereal place
That scientific folk ca' space,
Whaur mighty worlds in millions look
Like dots in a huge copybook.
Inquisitive, like a' her sex,
The wife did forward stretch her neck,
That she micht first see ilka star,
Whan quick she overturned the car,
And as I drapp'd into the moon
I saw her whirlin' high aboon,
And growin' large and pure o' face—
Yon's her, my Venus, Queen o' Space,
The mother o' the Scottish race.

"She aften sends a smile to cheer
Me in this mountainous country here,
That much resembles Scotland's Heilan's,
But, oh! it lacks the herds and sheilan's,
And there's nae fur nor feathered game,
Nor corn to fill a hungry wame,
But certain gases I wi' care
Do into pleasant food prepare,
That strengthens me to trim and licht
The big roon' lantern moon at nicht,
And grease its axis at ilk pole
That it its course may smoothly roll.
So fear not for anither flood,
Unless the sons o' Scottish blood

Barter their prood and ancient name,
Or stoop to some vile deed o' shame.
If such should ever be the case
I'll let the moon rin mad through space,
Till seas are owre your mountains hurled,
And Scotland's washed clean oot the world."

* * *

THE POWER OF LIQUID AIR.

HUMOROUS READING.

O' A' the mony usefu' things
That searchin' man's fan' oot,
The greatest and the best, I ween,
'S the ane I write aboot;
For common folk frae morn till e'en
Need labour hard nae mair,
When ance we put to proper use
The power o' Liquid Air.

Noo Steam may shriek itsel' to daith,
And sabbin' dee the Win',
And giant Electricity
Staun' shakin' in its shune;
For a' their mighty, vaunted powers,
Oor scientifics swear,
Are naethin' to the miracles
We'll do wi' Liquid Air.

We'll get it into winged machines,
An' flee among the stars,
We'll plant the British Lion on
The highest peak in Mars;
We'll row wee Mercury to this earth
Doon Cloudland's fleecy stair
Like a gigantic ball o' snaw
Wi' sturdy Liquid Air.

And then the frozen North we'll thaw,
The burning East we'll freeze,
And lay a floor o' polished ice
Across the Atlantic Seas,
That darin' youths may speed awa'
To Yankeeland and bear
Their faithers hame upon a sleigh
Propelled by Liquid Air.

But better still, the fatal blow
We'll deal auld Nickie Ben.
For hoo he cruelly cremates
The souls o' wicked men;
If preachin' folks wha ken him best
Show us his torrid lair,
We'll turn it into Frigid Zone
Wi' a waft o' Liquid Air.

And goodness then shall freely bloom
Whan evil's lockéd by,
And worldly folk may hoard their gear,
Yet heavenward keep their eye;

And e'en gang up clean through the clouds
Without a word o' prayer,
If they but tak' a double dose
O' risin' Liquid Air.

And then on earthly folks' defects
Wi' unco skill 'twill act,
For skinny men it will expand
And fat anes 'twill contract;
And anes whaes conscience, like bad corns,
Does daily pain them sair,
May burn the ill bits to the root
Wi' a drap o' Liquid Air.

And, feth, 'twill heat or cool a room,
Or cook whate'er we like,
To save oor legs 'twill turn the wheels
O' man or woman's bike;
And a' we want we'll maybe get,
For science folk declare
The genii's left Aladdin's lamp
To work wi' Liquid Air.

But when oor colliers drap their picks
And engineers their tools,
The Government officials may
Come roon' wi' tapes and rules
To measure a' the atmosphere
And tax us each fit square—
The same as Companies do wi' gas—
Oor use o' Liquid Air.

Then we may a' kick up oor heels,
And mak' a great adae
'Boot hoo oor nation aye finds things
For workin' men to pay.
Can't it for ance relieve the poor,
And seize the millionaire,
And squeeze oot o' his money bags
The price o' Liquid Air?

But what if this great boasted power
Should do but wonders sma',
Or, like my lengthy, halting rhyme,
Prove naethin' else but blaw?
I'll hae this consolation still,
Though some may think it puir,
That ither folk as weel as me
'S been hoaxed by Liquid Air.

* * *

"IN MEMORIAM" LINES.

In Leven's beauteous valley,
'Mid nature's grand display,
'Twas there that first your infant eyes
Beheld the light of day.
'Twas there you grew a toiler bold
Amid life's hopes and fears,
And wooed and wed our mother dear
To bless your later years.

'Twas there we called thee father first,
As round thy knee we ran,
And thought there ne'er was born on earth
A kindlier hearted man.
'Twas there the fearful Reaper came
To claim thee as his prey;
And in the strong cold arms of Death
Bore thy dear form away.

'Twas there we laid thee reverently
In thy cold narrow bed;
And yet with heavy hearts we mourn,
Our loving father dead.
For truly we do comprehend
The void that Death has made
As battling on through life we go
Without thy generous aid.

But why should we frail mortals mourn?
Though hearts and homes are riven;
Earth holds a poor, mean heritage,
Compared with that of heaven.
God loves us with a love sincere;
He was our father's Friend;
And if we trust Him, we shall meet
Our dear sire at the end.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF AN OLD FRIEND.

When early summer's golden rays
Set fields and woods aglow,
She who for eighty years had watch'd
The seasons come and go,
On a calm, sweet holy morn
Of God's most blessed day,
Through "the valley of the shadow"
Passed to brighter realms away.

She had fought her battle bravely—
Her weary course was run;
Childlike sobbing o'er her pillow,
Stood the old grey-bearded one
Who in her life's fair springtime
Sought her for his loving wife,
And shared 'bove half a century
With her the trials of life.

But the calm dead face before him
Had a sweetness in its look
That soothed his old heart's throbbing,
For the cold thin hand he took
And pressed it to his bosom,
And murmured with a smile:
"I'll be with you up in glory
In a very little while."

And daily he is longing
For that happy morning's birth
That will free his soul forever
From the troubles of this earth,
And place him with his lost one,
Evermore in joy to be,
Where swells the heavenly chorus,
In the bright eternity.

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TWA WEE CURLY DUGGIES.

CHILDREN'S RHYME.

Twa wee bonnie curly duggies,
Wi' stumpy tails an' cocked luggies,
Were sent by their mammy ae bricht simmer day
Oot to the green to romp an' play.

Said the ane to the ither: "Im tired o' this fun,
Efter mistress pussy let us hae a run;
We'll chase her through the gairden in amang the kail,
An' bark in her face an' bite at her tail."

"Na, na," said the ither, "that wadna' richt be,
An' wi' sic' a like daein' mammy wadna' agree;
For she tauld us baith to keep oot o' mischief,
An' you ken disobedience but leads to grief."

"That's a' very true," said the first ane; but then
We're oot o' mammy's sicht an' oor pranks she winna ken;
So if you winna come, promise that you winna tell,
An' efter mistress pussy I will go mysel'."

So it ran awa' roon to the back o' the hoosie,
An' searched an' searched till it fand mistress pussy,
But sadly an' tearfully she was sittin'
Bathin' the broo o' a wee sick kitten.

The duggie rushed at them, an' barked, an' made to bite,
The poor little kitten near died wi' fright;
But brave mistress pussy quickly raised her paw,
An' left an ugly scratch on the little duggie's jaw.

The duggie yelped wi' pain, an' greetin' socht its brither;
An' the awfu' din it made brocht forth its anxious mither.
Quo' she, "what ails you dearie?"; it couldna tell a lee,
"You're punished weel," she answered, "for disobeyin' me."

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A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MAJOR HUGH M. R. EWING,

who died at Cardross on 2nd December, 1889.

The sobbing of the river,
And the naked moaning trees,
With tones of melancholy
Fill the young December breeze;
And a cloud of woe has hovered
From Cardross by the sea,
And robed in awful sadness
The works of Croftengea.

For young, high-gifted Ewing,
The generous, free, and just,
The soul of truth and honour,
No true man feared to trust,
The great industrious leader,
The prince of business men,
'Mong his faithful, toiling servants,
Shall never come again.

O! fair, historic Cardross,
Where closed his noble eye,
No fitter place in Scotland
Could loyal hearted die;
For Bruce, the mightiest monarch
That e'er drew Scottish breath,
Left thine ancient village glorious
With the mem'ry of his death.

But Ewing, honoured Major
Of our stalwart volunteers,
Left a richer, nobler treasure
Than the gold and pomp of peers;
For scan his life's short history,
And, page by page, you'll find
The pure and noble record
True good men leave behind.

Heaven shower thy choicest blessings
On his fair young widowed wife;
Gift her children with the goodness
That adorned their father's life.

Kindle in his young heir's bosom
A sympathetic flame,
And again may breathe a Ewing
Worthy of his father's name.

Not with tears nor wails of sorrow
Above his hallowed bed,
But by loving him that's living,
We shall honour most the dead.
Our hearts shall ever cherish
The good the sire has done,
And our lips breathe hopes and blessings
For the welfare of his son.

◆ ◆ ◆

LINES ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

Thou art gone, little Josey,
My beautiful child!
On whom a kind father
So tenderly smiled;
Thy mother who watched thee
And nursed thee with joy,
Weeps long o'er the loss
Of her dear little boy.

Our hearts filled with hope
As you ran round the hearth,
And fondly we gazed
On your innocent mirth;

We harked to your chatter,
And joined in your play,
Till the Angel of Death
Bore you swiftly away.

Your dear little playmates
Who crowd round the door,
Can scarce comprehend
That they'll see you no more.
Your grandmother tells them,
With tears in her eyes:
"Wee Josey's an Angel,
Beyond the blue skies."

Thy wee sister misses
Your face bright and fair,
And sadly she looks
At your wee vacant chair,
Then roams through the rooms
Where in life thou didst tread,
And moans in her anguish:
"Wee Josey is dead!"

Oh! child, when our trials
And troubles shall cease
May we meet thee above
In that mansion of peace;
Enjoying that glory
Redeemed sinners win,
Where love reigns eternal,
And banished is sin.

THE DYING SHIPBUILDER.

In a cottage by the Leven a poor shipbuilder lay,
His arms were weak and useless, his hair was tinged with gray;
His voice was low and gentle, his grief he tried to hide,
He who once worked hard and cheery in the yard by Leven's side.

"Alas! dear wife," he murmured, as the tear stood in his eye,
"To this earth with all its sorrow I soon shall bid good-bye;
But amid the awful hardships and troubles that are past,
Thank God I've borne them bravely, I am honest to the last.

"So, wife, bring in the children; come forth my eldest, John,
You shall comfort your fond mother when your father dear is gone;
Restrain those tears that you would shed and cheer your mother's heart,
And pray that God may give you strength to act a true son's part.

"Watch o'er your little brother, and guard your sister too,
That in the days and years to come they may be proud of you;
Be ever faithful to them, tread the path your father trod,
Then you may look up proudly to meet the smile of God.

"But my eyes are growing dim and my limbs are stiff and sore,
Yet I pray that old Dumbarton may have better days in store,
Though I can never see them, for death on me does call
To take me off for ever—God bless! God bless you all!"

Then he fell back on his pillow and motionless he lay,
His voice was hushed for ever, his soul had passed away.
Still the Leven river murmurs by the cottage once his pride,
But no more he lifts a hammer in the yard by Leven's side.

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LINES ON A FRIEND LEAVING FOR AUSTRALIA

Friend and neighbour kind and true,
We must bid farewell to you,
For the ocean dark and drear
Soon must bear you far from here;
From this place you love the best,
Where your darling wife doth rest,
And this land that gave you birth—
Scotland, dearest land on earth.

But since o'er the ocean foam
You must seek another home,
May your friends prove as sincere
As you always found them here ;
And we fondly hope and pray
God will guide you on your way,
And new life and joy restore
When you reach Australia's shore.

Though our townsmen all are true,
None were better loved than you ;
And our prayers and blessings fall
On you beloved by all.
Our generous loving friend
With your kindly word to lend ;
Until all our days are done,
We will praise John Hamilton.

◆ ◆ ◆

TO AN AULD CRONIE.

Dear Jock, dae you remember
When we were bairnies twa,
Hoo mony michty castles
We biggit in the snaw ;
And hoo they aye were melted,
Like oor imagination
That reared great castles 'bune oor heids
Withoot a sure foondation ?

The wa's, though big and bonnie,
A blast they couldna staun,
Though some a' richt stood until nicht,
They melted ere the dawn ;
But never did we twa despair
Nor think oor efforts vain,
But gethered a' oor scattered hopes
To big them up again.

When manhood years began tae dawn
On frien's we turned oor back,
And travelled through this weary warl'
Oor fortunes tae mak' ;
But Fortune's smile did us beguile,
An', Jock, we maun confess
That travellin' through this weary warl'
Has left us penniless.

An' here, wi' heid doon cast
An' sairly wrinkled broo,
We view the glorious past,
Regretful tae us noo ;
But let us be content, dear Jock,
We hae a' we desire,
An' grumble nae mair wi' oor lot
An' seek tae rise nae higher.

THE FATE OF TWO LOVERS.

While wanderin' dowie doon the glen
Nae birdies' sangs I hear
For thinkin' on twa youthfu' he'rts
That lo'ed each ither dear.
Grim sorrow clouds aroun' my soul
As dreamily I stare
At yonder lanely trystin'-tree
Whaur Jock meets Jean nae mair.

Within that little ivy cot
Lived Jeanie blyth and gay,
Until the cruel fever snatched
Her sweet young life away.
Puir Johnnie heard the waefu' news,
It grieved him deep an' sair
To think by yonder trystin'-tree
He'd meet young Jean nae mair.

He bade the villagers adieu,
An' left the trystin' tree,
Wi' its sweet memories o' the past,
Tae cross the raging sea.
An' while upon the ocean deep
He battled 'gainst despair,
A hurricane o'ertook the ship
An' Jock wis seen nae mair.

Yon kirkyard hauds young Jeanie's clay,
Puir Johnnie's grave 's the sea,
The villagers, wi' mournfu' face,
Aft' view the trystin'-tree;
An' lookin' tearfully abune
To that bright land o' prayer,
"There Jock and Jean hae met," they say,
"To separate nae mair."

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"*IN MEMORIAM*" *LINES.*

Cold 'neath the clay wee Jessie lies,
Her trials of life are o'er,
Dear mother, dry your tear-dimmed eyes
And weep your loss no more.
Oh! dear father, cease to mourn,
These useless tears you shed
Can't make the soul of her return
Who slumbers with the dead.

We sadly view the lonely hearth
Round which she loved to play,
For all its joyous sounds of mirth
Seem to have died away.
We miss her little prattling feet,
Her cheery voice is still,
And death has left a vacant seat
That none on earth can fill.

The eye of Him who rules above,
To whom she often prayed,
Looked down and called her in His love,
Our little fair-haired maid.
Her little soul He did command
To leave this sinful earth,
And go to that angelic land
Of everlasting mirth.

* * *

LINES WRITTEN WHEN LYING IN THE INFIRMARY.

At midnight when the lights are low,
In the old Infirmary ward,
I can see a gentle woman
Like an angel keeping guard
O'er the poor, weak, suffering mortals
As in words of peace and love,
She cheers the fainting spirits,
As they wing their flight above.

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